



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Bradley C. Church

Lt. Col. Dave Kolmer of the 192d Civil Engineering Squadron plays the bagpipes during a recognition ceremony for the Fallen Airman Memorial on Wednesday, April 26, 2006, at Ali Base, Iraq. The memorial is dedicated to those who made the ultimate sacrifice in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

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"Young Warriors" get a taste of military life

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FROM THE TOP



Adjutant General shares vision for Virginia Guard

By Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr.
Adjutant General of Virginia

I am committed to insuring the Virginia National Guard is fully prepared to meet its state and federal mission. It will take time to achieve and will not be realized without some growing pain.

Although we are in the process of transforming the Army National Guard and are transitioning the Air Guard to Langley Air Force Base in many ways we remain a Cold War legacy force. The events of 9-11 have taught us we cannot allow this to go unchanged.

We must improve how well we are prepared to respond to unforeseen threats. We must learn to operate in an environment that leverages our strengths and capabilities with those of other state agencies. We must prepare ourselves to respond to an unforeseen event from a "cold start" and quickly be on the scene that event supporting the incident or combatant commander.

To achieve that I have established the Virginia National Guard headquarters in Richmond. While the headquarters for the Virginia Army National Guard will remain at Ft. Pickett and the Virginia Air National Guard headquarters will remain at Sandston. This presence in Richmond provides an opportunity for the senior leadership of the Virginia National Guard to interact with the leadership of the other agencies that we will work with. I am working to develop plans that assure the Virginia National Guard is fully prepared to integrate itself with other agencies in support of incident response, consequence management, and recovery operations. We must look beyond these baseline requirements and seek out potential partners and share with them what our capabilities are and learn how our combined capabilities can be



Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr.

leveraged to respond to contingencies.

Our Soldiers, Airmen, and their families are our most important asset. You are

The Commonwealth's Guardian

A Transformed Joint Team, Fully Prepared to Answer Every Call to Duty from the Commonwealth and Nation. Caring for Our Guardsmen and their Families with Systems that are Benchmarks in the Nation. Measuring Ourselves by the Success of our Small Units and Their Leaders. Customer Oriented, Committed and Competent.

willing to do what most people will not. You give your time, talent, and yourselves to protect our way of life. I am committed

to seeing you have a world class support system that is responsive to your needs and not the wants of a bureaucracy.

I have outlined an ambitious plan for the next 18 months. It is achievable but only if our people are trained, educated, and developed. I am committed to seeing that our Noncommissioned Officers receive the training necessary to carry out the day to day business of the Virginia Army and Air National Guard. I am committed to seeing that our officers receive the education necessary to prepare them to lead the Virginia Army and Air National Guard well into the 21st Century. And I am committed to seeing that our civilian workforce is developed to provide the Virginia National Guard with the continuity and stability necessary to sustain it in the face of the challenges that lie ahead.

I am committed to assuring our Soldiers and Airmen have a family support system in place that relieves you of the burden of wondering whether or not your families are being cared for while you are deployed. I expect our family program to be the benchmark for family programs across the nation. We are making strides in this area but I want to see us make additional progress quickly.

Today the Virginia National Guard is transforming while remaining an operational force. I am committed to the successful completion of this transformation. We must be successful if the Virginia National Guard is to remain viable. We must become comfortable doing this from a no notice "cold start." That certainly is different from the environment we lived in prior to 9-11.

I felt it was important for you to know where I believe the Virginia National Guard must go to remain the viable, relevant, and reliable organization that you have come to know. I want you and the people of Virginia to know what is taking place in the Virginia National Guard.

Virginia Guard units conduct Freedom Salute ceremonies

By Capt. Lesley Kipling
91st Troop Command Virginia Guard Public Affairs

If you deployed to the Middle East anytime between February 2005 and March 2006, you were probably in processed by the 183rd Personnel Support Detachment from Richmond, Va. The unit's 44 soldiers, serving in small teams on five separate camps in Kuwait, handled every type of personnel issue to include, preparing promotion packets, processing awards and replacing ID Cards.

"They did an outstanding job. [This deployment] is just another example of the way that our guardsman have risen to the occasion whenever they've been asked," said Brig. Gen. Frank E. Batts, Deputy Commander of the joint task force headquarters in Virginia, said at the 183rd's Freedom Salute Ceremony in April.

The Freedom Salute Ceremony was not just an opportunity to recognize the outstanding soldiers, but also to thank their family members and community organizations for their support.

In addition to the 183rd, the 1173rd Transportation Company and Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 111th Field Artillery conducted Freedom Salutes in April. For more coverage of the ceremonies, visit www.virginiaguard.com.



Photo by Capt. Lesley Kipling, 91st Troop Command Public Affairs

Congressman Virgil Goode presents an American Flag to Spc. Susana Garcia during the 1173rd Transportation Company's Freedom Salute on April 9.

Family Programs

Continued from Page 6

members. The committee provided \$800 to support the youth retreat program.

Agresti noted the Guard and reserves do not have programs like the Army Community Service or other similar programs so the VFW works "to fill the void" by helping families with everyday finances, home repairs, rent, utilities, and even coordination with local attorneys for legal assistance. He said the VFW provided over \$2.8 million for scholarships nationwide and more than \$50,000 in Virginia alone.

Agresti said the VFW is looking to reach out to Guard family readiness groups during pre-deployment activities as well as while the Soldiers and Airmen are gone

and following their return to assist with job placement or VA claims. He said that Guard and reserve personnel and families may contact the VFW MAP through any of the 180 VFW Posts in Virginia, on-line via America Support You or www.vfw.org, or through dedicated MAP coordinators located in the Tidewater area, Northern Virginia, Western Virginia, and central Virginia.

In addition to partnering with the American Legion and VFW, the Virginia National Guard also worked with National Guard Bureau to provide program specialists to work with the youth in by providing team building and live skills training. The Virginia National Guard Family Program will continue to expand in an attempt to meet the needs of our

families and support the readiness of Army and Air Guard units. In addition to family readiness group training and youth retreats the program will also support marriage enrichment seminars and other activities centered around strengthening the tie between families and the Virginia National Guard.

For more information about Guard Family Action Plans and Guard Family Team Building log on to www.gfap.org, www.gftb.org, or www.guardfamily.org. For more information about the Veterans of Foreign Wars Military Assistance Program log on to www.vfwva.org. For more information on the Virginia National Guard Family Program log on to www.virginiaguard.com and "click" on "Family/ Youth Programs."

Virginia National Guard Federal Deployments

# *	Unit	Where Deployed	Home Town
157	Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 111th Field Artillery	Iraq	Richmond
60	192nd Fighter Wing, 200th Weather Flight and 203rd REDHORSE	Various locations	Sandston and Virginia Beach
55	Various units	Army Guard Readiness Center	
275	2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation	Iraq	Sandston

* All listings for numbers of Soldiers are approximate.

News Briefs

New Virginia Guard toll free number activated

The Virginia National Guard has activated a new toll free number for contacting key agencies in the Guard. The number is: 1-888-483-2682.

This number can be used to access recruiting information as well as a host of Soldier, Airmen and Family Care services provided by the Virginia Guard.

Soldiers ordered to state duty for fire fighting

On April 16, 40 Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry stationed in Martinsville and three Soldiers from the 429th Brigade Support Battalion stationed in Danville were ordered to State Active Duty to assist in fire fighting operations.

The Soldiers joined with the Virginia Department of Forestry to assist in fighting a wild fire that had consumed over 300 acres of forest in the Bull Mountain area of Patrick County, Va. at the time they were ordered to state active duty. At the time, the fire has threatened 70 homes and 35 families have been evacuated from the area.

The Virginia National Guard deployed to assist in operations at Bull Mountain after Gov. Tim Kaine declared a state of emergency on April 15. The fire burned more than 4,000 acres and was reported contained on April 26.

New contact procedures for incentives questions

Over the past few months the Incentives Office has made a number of changes in its procedures in order to provide Soldiers the best customer service possible and to ensure Soldiers contracts and incentive payments are processed in a timely manner. Sgt. 1st Class Smith and Sgt. 1st Class Bruch are the two Incentive Mangers tasked with assisting units in solving incentive issues.

Both Incentive Managers, are making all incentive payments, and processing all incentive contracts. Rena Mason is the Customer Representative (434)

Virginia Soldier Earns Top Honors



Photo by Staff Sgt. A.J. Coyne, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Pfc. Justin Hancock takes careful aim during the rifle marksmanship portion of the First Army, Region II Soldier of the Year Competition, April 22-23 at Fort Pickett. Hancock represented Virginia in the competition and beat out Soldiers from four other states to take top honors for the region. He will advance to face winners from the other seven regions at the First Army Soldier of the Year Competition in July at Fort Campbell, Ky.

298-6109, who is tasked in tracking all payments, solving minor incentive issues and ensuring all concerns from Soldiers and units are answered in a timely manner. Effective immediately all bonus issues will be emailed to bonus.virginia@us.army.mil No longer will issues be emailed directly to Smith or Bruch.

Fredericksburg Armory holds open house

The Fredericksburg Armory, which consists of the 116th Special Troops Battalion, Company F of the 429th Brigade Support Battalion and D Company of 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry, conducted a combination Open House and JROTC Challenge on April 8. The Challenge encompassed over 150 students from six Northern Virginia and Central Virginia JROTC programs, Northumberland, Spotsylvania, Caroline, Colonial Forge,

North Stafford, and King George.

The Challenge was hampered by weather, but continued inside the armory. The students participated in land navigation and map orienteering classes, medically evaluating a casualty class, a modified APFT (Push ups and Sit ups), and a culmination event that tested their skills in a litter carry relay, and evaluations from the classes given through out the day.

The students had pizza cooked by the unit and participated in interactive simulators and events, such as a night vision room and the convoy simulator. The convoy simulator was the highlight of the program, giving the students a chance to react to targets in downtown Baghdad.

The students also had a chance to see the static displays set up by each unit within the Armory. The day concluded with an awards ceremony. The schools are already planning on returning next year for the 2nd annual Fredericksburg JROTC Challenge.



On the Cover



Participants in the Virginia National Guard's Warrior Weekend prepare to rappel. (Photo by Staff Sgt. A. J. Coyne, Virginia National Guard Public Affairs)

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Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs Office

Virginia National Guard medical personnel conducted a first aid demonstration during the SkillsUSA Virginia Leadership Conference and Skills Competition held in Richmond on April 28 and 29.

Virginia Guard helps make SkillsUSA event a success

By Maj. Cotton Puryear
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Soldiers from the Virginia National Guard played a key role in the success of the SkillsUSA Virginia Leadership Conference and Skills Competition held on April 28 and 29 in Richmond.

SkillsUSA is a national student organization for students enrolled in career and technical occupations in Virginia's high schools and community colleges. The state-level competition includes more than 1,000 district champions competing in 101 categories, from advertising and aviation to welding and Web design.

"Without the help of the Virginia Guard, this event probably wouldn't have happened," said Victor Sorrell, the chairman of the conference. "The Guard is giving us unbelievable support." He explained that there are only two paid support personnel for the event, and all the rest are volunteers. The Virginia Guard provided personnel to help plan the event, as well as support personnel to help with the actual running of the event.

In addition to supplying personnel, the Dove Street Armory was the site of several carpentry, plumbing and masonry competitions.



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Va Guard Public Affairs

The Dove Street Armory was home to several different skills competitions and the Virginia Guard also provided t-shirts for all the participants.

Portable exhibit showcases Virginia Guard history

By Lt. Col. Chester C. Carter, III
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

As a result of the efforts by Maj. Jimmy Kilbourne, Bev Boyko and John Listman, the Virginia National Guard now has a display that literally provides a window to the Guard's history.

Boyko and Listman both work in support of the Virginia National Guard historical program and Kilbourne is a Virginia National Guard history buff, and the three collaborated to design and construct a display that manages to succinctly tell the story of the Virginia Army and Air Guard in a 16 foot long display.

The portable exhibit made its debut at the 46th annual Virginia National Guard Officers Association conference in Virginia Beach on April 21 and 22. Retirees, spouses, family and current service members all enjoyed seeing the history of the Virginia Guard on display.

Many of the civilian guests of the hotel also stopped to take in 400 years of history presented by the exhibit. The display, which includes Virginia militia uniforms, tells the story of the development and



Photo by Lt. Col. Chester C. Carter, III, Virginia National Guard Public Affairs

Maj. Jimmy Kilbourne and Bev Boyko review the Virginia National Guard history display they recently completed. The display provides a historical overview of the Virginia National Guard from the Jamestown Settlement in 1607 to the present.

growth of the Virginia National Guard from the Jamestown settlement in 1607 to present day.

The display is available to support

various activities. If you are interested in having the display for your location contact Maj. Jimmy Kilbourne at 434-292-8563 or Bev Boyko at 434-292-1912.

Integration

Continued from Page 10

community - full integration is expected by 2009. Final plans are expected to be finished by the end of this year, Field said.

In the meantime, "there's also some cultural issues we have to blend together," Field said.

"As with any big life move," said Staff Sgt. Ryan Martin, a mechanic currently commuting from Richmond, "there's some apprehension."

While even Martin was drooling over the chance to work on the Raptor, he noted that "people are established in their communities up there. Some are deacons in their church. Baseball coaches. That's a lot to leave."

Having the two units working together will provide a litany of benefits, too.

For Tech Sgt. Brian Orzolek, who lives in York County, it's extra money. "You could say I just got a raise," Orzolek said. "I'm saving \$200 a month in gas."

The wings will maintain separate commands, but will share planes and equipment. That, too, will save money. More cost savings will eventually also come from the fact that the part-time Guardsmen will be training to be as deployable as the active-duty folks, but unless activated, won't receive the same pay and benefits.

When combined, no matter which unit patch they wear, more airmen will be combat-ready more of the time. In the long run, local airmen may not have to deploy as often because the pool of troops will be larger.

The Guard, by its very nature, Guy said, holds a wealth of experience.

"Our youngest airman just came off active duty," Guy said. "He's the youngest, most junior member of the wing and he already knows how to accomplish the mission."

Plus, aligning with an active-duty wing could be beneficial for the Guard's wing in that the Air National Guard has reportedly looked at getting rid of 30 of its 88 fighter wings.

Until then, the two Guard pilots, including Guy, will continue flying the Raptor. Another will soon head to Tyndall Air Force Base in Florida for flight training, and the dozens of mechanics who keep the planes running will keep working in Langley's hangars.

Eventually, 31 pilots from the Guard wing will be trained to fly the Raptor.

"We've come a long way, and are excited about where we're going," Guy said. "What makes the Guard special is the people aren't doing it for the extra money. They do it for the love of planes. They do it for the love of the job. They do it for the love of this country."



Photo by Staff Sgt. A. J. Coyne, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

A participant in the Virginia National Guard Warrior Weekend navigates the Leader Reaction Course.

“Young Warriors” get a taste of Army life

By Staff Sgt. A.J. Coyne
Virginia National Guard Public Affairs

More than 300 “soon-to-be” Soldiers descended on Fort Pickett April 21-23 for the first-ever Virginia Army National Guard Warrior Weekend. The three-day event gave the “young warriors” a taste of basic training and Army life.

“It was awesome,” said Heather Fender, who will leave for basic training in June. “This is good training to get people ready for basic. It’s a good program and shows us what it’ll be like when we get there.”

The weekend was conducted by the Virginia Army National Guard’s Recruit Sustainment Program, which was established to prepare its non-prior service Soldiers for basic training and advanced individual training. The aim of Warrior Weekend is to create a low intensity version of basic training and AIT so the recruits are physically, mentally and administratively prepared when they arrive.

For three days at Fort Pickett, the recruits lived as Soldiers. They wore BDU’s, slept in barracks, marched in formation, and

learned when to salute and when to stand at parade rest. They also performed physical training, learned rappelling, traversed the Leader Reaction Course and practiced urban tactics at the Pickett MOUT site.

Unfortunately, a steady stream of rain forced the cancellation of some scheduled events. But the weekend was still a valuable learning opportunity for the recruits.

“You could tell they had all kinds of things planned for us,” said Michael Marchi, a recruit from Albermarle County. “The Leader Reaction Course was definitely good because it included everyone. We were so busy that we didn’t have time to think about being cold or wet.”

Although they were all Soldiers for the weekend, the recruits came from all over the commonwealth and from all walks of life. As a result, they each have their own reason for joining the National Guard.

Marchi joined because a close friend was recently killed in Iraq. Now he feels it’s his turn to serve in the infantry. He leaves for basic training in January 2007.

Meanwhile Fender, a high school junior from Jarratt, has known for some time that

she would join the military. A member of her high school JROTC for two years, Fender said her instructor has served as a father figure and role model to her.

“I just wanted to do something different with my life,” said Michael Langhorne, a high school junior from Sandston who decided in February to join the military. Langhorne will spend his summer at Fort Benning, where he’ll undergo basic training before returning for his senior year of high school.

But before they could each head off to basic training, they got a weekend-long lesson in what to expect in the Army and for many of them, it was better than they expected.

“I had fun this weekend and everything went by quickly,” Langhorne said. “I really liked the LRC and seeing people fall in the water.”

“I wish we would’ve run more but it was exciting,” said Fender, who said she loves doing PT and running. “We got to meet interesting people and other Soldiers who are going to be going through the same thing in a little while.”

Soldier receives first G-RAP “big check”

From Staff Reports

The first Virginia Army National Guard G-RAP check was presented by Maj. Gen. Robert Newman and Command Sgt. Maj. Bob Huffman to Sgt. Troy Catterton. The \$2,000 check was presented to Catterton during the Enlisted Association of the National Guard annual conference held in Roanoke on April 28. Catterton is assigned to Detachment 1, 266th Military Police Company.

The Guard Recruiting Assistance Program or G-RAP is designed for Soldiers of the Guard who are actively supporting recruiting activities to be compensated for their effort. G-RAP was activated in Virginia on Feb. 13, 2006. As of May 1, 2006, 856 Soldiers of the Virginia Army National Guard have signed up to work as recruiting assistant under the program and 741 have completed the required training. The program has resulted in 59 enlistments for the Virginia Guard.

G-RAP is a contracted program designed for individuals who voluntarily apply online at www.GuardRecruitingAssistant.com to become eligible to serve as a part-time Recruiting Assistant (RA). The RA applicant will be verified and hired by a contractor, not the Virginia Army Guard.

The intent of the program is for the RA to use his or her contacts to identify potential “Soldiers” who can enlist and successfully contribute to the Virginia Army National Guard during their enlistment.



Photo by Lt. Col. Chester C. Carter, III, Virginia National Guard Public Affairs Office

Maj. Gen. Robert Newman (far left) and Command Sgt. Maj. Bob Huffman (far right) present the first \$2,000 check paid to a Soldier of the Virginia Army National Guard to Sgt Troy Catterton.

Once a potential Soldier is identified and pre-qualified, the RA will facilitate a meeting with the local Recruiting and Retention NCO (RRNCO). The RRNCO, RA and potential Soldier will then work together to process the potential Soldier and move the potential Soldier toward enlistment in the Guard.

When the potential “Soldier” is enlisted the RA receives an initial payment of \$1,000, with a second \$1,000 payment upon

the new “Soldier’s” successful shipment to Basic Training. The exact payment timelines vary depending upon prior service/non-prior status and availability of training seats.

The Guard launched the Guard Recruiting Assistance Program (G-RAP) with the objective of gaining 70,000 enlistments and meeting the Army Guard end-strength goal of 350,000 by the end of September of this year.

Corps of Engineers commander visits Fort Pickett

By Sgt. 1st Class Anne Burnley
Fort Pickett Public Affairs

Lt. Gen. Carl A. Strock, Chief of Engineers and commander of the United States Army Corps of Engineers, observed cadets from the Virginia Military Institute Army ROTC program training at the Virginia Army National Guard Maneuver Training Center, Fort Pickett, Blackstone, Va. During his six-hour visit on April 8, Strock walked quietly between groups of VMI cadets who had completed the Situation Training Exercise lanes, The Leadership Reaction Course, and the rappel, all part of their ninth annual Spring Field Training Exercise.

Considered a “critical recruiting and retention event where Army cadets undergo exciting, hands-on training that few ROTC programs can provide,” the FTX also is designed to help cadets

decide “to pursue commissions in the Active Army, the Army Reserves, or the Army National Guard”.

Strock expressed both appreciation and admiration for each cadet’s call to duty, and selfless service in the U.S. Army. He graciously thanked the young men and women for their commitment to the military during a time of war. Strock acknowledged the courage, resolve, and personal sacrifice of all soldiers serving in the armed forces of the United States.

Sharing brief anecdotes about his personal experiences, Strock encouraged cadets to become listeners and observers. He advised cadets to work with, and listen to, noncommissioned officers. Strock also advised cadets to communicate with, and rely on, their families for support.

Strock asked cadets to be mission-oriented, to set goals, and maintain high expectations.

Guard Family Programs support military families

By Lt. Col. Chester C. Carter, III
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

The Virginia National Guard Family Program delivers a wide range of services to military families here in the Commonwealth. Like the Virginia National Guard, the family program is community based and is designed to support all military families in Virginia regardless of the branch or component of the service member.

The Virginia National Guard Family Program has two main objectives. One objective is to support a network of Family Assistance Centers located throughout Virginia. The other objective is to assist Virginia National Guard units to maintain and sustain Family Readiness Groups.

The family assistance program is designed to provide an outreach to service families in areas that are not served by active component installations. It is the "primary entry point for service and assistance that any family member may need during the deployment process." When the family of a service member lives in Roanoke or the New River Valley, traveling to an active component installation to obtain support can take a three hour drive. Knowing where to turn for help with the variety of problems that can face a family when a member is deployed overseas can be daunting. That family can turn to a Virginia National Guard family program center for assistance from a large number of support programs available in the community.

The 10 Virginia National Guard family assistance centers are on call "24 - 7" and have a full-time staff available to support families by providing them with a single point of contact to gain information about the wide range of agencies that are prepared and willing to support military families in the local community. While the people working in the family assistance centers are not counselors, they do have a great deal of knowledge about support programs and know how to get a family in need the appropriate support necessary to aid in resolving the many problems confronting them. During the last 12 months the family

assistance center staff has handled over 4,000 requests for assistance.

The family readiness group program is oriented toward maintaining unit readiness and supporting family members of deployed Virginia National Guard Soldiers and Airmen. Each unit of the Virginia National Guard has a family readiness group. The family readiness group works with the unit commander to ensure Guard families are made to feel as much as part of the Guard as the Soldiers and Airmen do. Unlike the family assistance center program that is staffed by a full time cadre, the family readiness groups are staffed almost exclusively by volunteers. The focus of these family readiness groups are their respective Virginia Guard units, whereas the primary focal point for the family assistance centers is an outreach to military family members without regard to branch of service or component.

The most recent family program training activities provide insight of how and what direction the program is evolving into. In late March the program sponsored the Virginia National Guard Youth Team Building Retreat. In early April family readiness group volunteers from across Virginia received training on a wide range of topics to necessary to successfully operate a unit level family readiness group program.

The Virginia National Guard partnered with American Legion Post 74 in Charlottesville and the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to conduct the Virginia National Guard Youth Team Building Retreat March 25 and 26. During the retreat, 45 National Guard family youngsters gathered in Charlottesville to share experiences. The intent of the retreat was to provide the youngsters with a variety of education, life skill, and team building activities over the two day retreat.

Col. Kimberly Dillon, who has overall responsibility for Virginia National Guard family support programs, said the youth retreat is designed to recognize the youth for the sacrifices they make in support of their parent's military commitment with



Photo by Lt. Col. Chester C. Carter, III, Va. Guard PAO

Youngsters participating in the Virginia Guard's Youth Retreat quickly learned the value of teamwork as they conquered obstacles and enjoyed the excitement of new experiences.

the Guard. Dillon said that in addition to the activities the youth participate in during a retreat such as this; they can also participate in leadership programs which are conducted across the country and educational camps such as the Lewis and Clark Expedition Camp being held in North Dakota.

Dillon said the "activities are designed to educate, inform, build life skills, make new friends, and most importantly have fun!" She said the Virginia National Guard has one program designed to meet the needs of Guard youngsters from age 8 through 12 and from another to meet the needs of young people from age 13 through 18 years old.

M. C. "Connie" Agresti, Deputy Chief of Staff for the Veterans of Foreign Wars National Military Assistance Program Committee, or MAP Committee, said the Virginia National Guard youth retreat was a "natural fit" for his committee. He said his committee is a VFW outreach designed to support the families of deployed service

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Ribbon cutting ceremony held for MATES

By Lt. Col. Chester C. Carter, III
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

National Guard, state, and local officials gathered at the Maneuver Area Training Equipment Site, or MATES, on April 26 to cut the ceremonial ribbon for the newly expanded maintenance facility at Fort Pickett. The ceremony was the culmination of over \$18 million in new construction and rehabilitation of existing facilities that began with a ground breaking ceremony on December 9, 2003.

The purpose of the MATES is to provide track and heavy vehicles to units training at Fort Pickett. Using units travel to Fort Pickett and receive equipment such as the M1 Abrams tank, M113 Personnel Carrier, or Paladin Howitzer from MATES; use the equipment; and then return the equipment to MATES when the Soldiers complete their training. MATES was established in 1961 with 31 employees and was known then as the Annual Training Equipment Pool.

The Annual Training Equipment Pool was housed in an old warehouse and two locomotive repair shops that were constructed in 1942. Some of these facilities were still in use when ground was broken in 2003 for the new maintenance facility. The construction project increased the size



Photo by Lt. Col. Chester C. Carter, III, Virginia National Guard Public Affairs

Maj. Gen. Robert Newman, Del. Tommy Wright of the Virginia General Assembly, Mayor J. S. Harris of Blackstone, and Clarence Simpson of the Nottoway County Board of Supervisors cut the ceremonial ribbon officially opening the new Virginia Army National Guard Maneuver Area Training Equipment Site at Fort Pickett.

of the MATES to over 153,000 square feet and eliminated the need for World War II vintage facilities where much of the maintenance on equipment supported by MATES took place.

Today the MATES has over 600 pieces of equipment supported by approximately 100 full-time employees. The new

construction provides MATES employees a state of the art maintenance facility fully capable of handling the complex equipment they must support. The facility, in conjunction with the \$23 million Multi-Purpose Range Complex, assure that Fort Pickett is fully prepared to support training well in to the future.

"Vital Guardian" tests the Guard's response capabilities

By Sgt. 1st Class Jack Holt
29th Infantry Division Public Affairs

The ubiquitous mythological town of Springfield was under attack today by the United Terrorists organization, another figment in the fertile imagination of the defenders of our nation in the National Guard. And it's a good thing, too.

The National Guard Bureau staged the "Vital Guardian" exercise on April 4, bringing together critical capabilities developed by the National Guard to support civilian authorities in response to emergencies of national significance. Under the curious eyes of hundreds of military and civilian dignitaries, both foreign and domestic, as well as members of the media, National Guardsmen from six states and the District of Columbia demonstrated their ability to perform critical tasks in response to an emergency of national significance.

The 34th Civil Support Team of the Virginia National Guard was the centerpiece for today's activities demonstrating their capability for "strategic reconnaissance," or the ability to move

quickly into an area of suspected biological, chemical, or nuclear hazard, identify the hazard, advise the incident commander on how to proceed, and provide the vital communication link between the local first responders, state, and federal authorities.

"It's a matter of leveraging capabilities," said Lt. Col. Jeffrey Hice, commander of the 34th CST. "Everybody brings a different capability, the local police, fire, emergency medical services; we all have different training, tasks, and abilities."

"We act as the nexus of those capabilities," he added. "No one can do it alone, and our job is to help link it all together for the incident commander."

At the request of civil authorities and the approval of the governor, a CST is designed to rapidly deploy to be at an incident site within two hours of the call. There are currently 55 teams consisting of the 22 Guardsman, one team per state or territory, and two in California. To date, all of them are on schedule in a phased implementation.

The 34th CST of the Virginia National Guard is one of the 36 already certified.

AG host first official visit with Tajiks

By Lt. Col. Chester C. Carter, III
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Commander of the Tajik National Guard, General-Major Rajabali Rahkmanoliev, conducted a visit with the Virginia National Guard on April 17 and 18 as part of the State Partnership Program. During the two-day visit Maj. Gen. Robert Newman, the Adjutant General of Virginia, hosted Rahkmanoliev in Richmond on April 17.

During their visit, Newman provided Rahkmanoliev with a command briefing which outlined the Virginia National Guard's federal and state capabilities and accomplishments. Rahkmanoliev also met with Secretary of Public Safety John Marshall while he was in Richmond. On April 18 Newman escorted Rahkmanoliev to Fort Pickett to visit the 183rd Regiment (Regional Training Institute).



Photo by Lt. Col. Chester C. Carter, III, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Maj. Gen. Robert Newman, the Adjutant General of Virginia, briefs General-Major Rajabali Rahkmanoliev, Commander of the Tajik National Guard, during Rahkmanoliev's visit to the Joint Force Headquarters.

The 183rd Regiment and the Tajikistan National Guard already have a strong relationship as a result of training experiences shared by the two organizations over the past year. This was the first meeting between Newman and a high-level delegation from the Republic of Tajikistan.

Two wings fly as one with Langley integration

By Stephanie Heinatz
Courtesy of *The Daily Press*

The National Guard and the military's reserve forces have always expected to work with hand-me-down equipment.

For that reason, Air Force Lt. Col. Phil Guy never allowed himself to dream of flying the F-22A Raptor.

After 14 years in the Air Force, the Yorktown resident made the decision to join the Guard.

He had always flown F-16s, and he continued flying them for the Richmond-based Virginia Air National Guard 192nd Fighter Wing. He assumed he'd end his career in the cockpit of the Fighting Falcon.

But that was five years ago.

Things have changed. Now the military needs troops to fight the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan while the Air Force is being called on to cut personnel.

As a result, the Guard and the Reserve are being mainstreamed in the military and in some ways, Hampton's Langley Air Force Base is leading the way.

Take a look inside Langley's 27th Fighter Squadron, 1st Fighter Wing hangar where the service's first operational Raptors are housed. Dozens of flight-suit-wearing, cammo-clad airmen walk to and from the flight line. They talk. They mingle. And only someone with a keen eye for unit designation patches would know

that more than 60 of them, including Guy, are Guardsmen.

After years of talking about it, the Virginia Air National Guard's 192nd Fighter Wing is well on its way to integrating with the 1st Fighter Wing and elements of the intelligence unit.

In 2004, Defense Department officials began talking about moving the Richmond wing to the Hampton base. It is the first time a Guard unit has trained on a new weapons system from its inception.

By January 2005, the shift began. On April 7, 2005, the official documents ordering the move were signed, sealed and delivered. Then the Base Realignment and Closure Commission made it final.

By 2009, the full transition of the 1,000-person unit - 70 percent of whom are part-time airmen - should be complete.

"It used to be that the Reserve did their thing, the Guard did their thing, and the active-duty folks did their thing," said Brig. Gen. Burton M. Field, commander of the 1st Fighter Wing. "We need the Guard and Reserve in peace time. We are trying to capitalize on what they bring to the fight. And it's even more demanding now with operations in Iraq and Afghanistan."

While the details are still being worked out - like written plans for where the headquarters will stand and what impact the addition of an entire air wing will have on the base and surrounding

See "Integration", Page 13



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia National Guard Public Affairs

Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Edward Lopez helps roll up the organizational colors of the Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment of the Engineer Brigade, 28th Infantry Division while Col. William C. Schneck, Jr., the brigade commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Earl Smith, the brigade sergeant major, hold the staff. Lopez was the first command sergeant major when the brigade was re-designated in 1995.

Engineer HQ inactivates as part of transformation

By Maj. Cotton Puryear
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Senior leaders of the Engineer Brigade, 28th Infantry Division took part in a ceremony on April 1 to case the unit's colors and inactivate the brigade headquarters organization based at the armory in Bowling Green, Va. The unit's inactivation is part of an ongoing transformation process in both the Virginia National Guard and the United States Army, and a new unit will be stationed in the armory where the brigade headquarters once occupied.

Acknowledging that the inactivation ceremony was a "sad day" for many of those present, Brig. Gen. Bob Newman, the adjutant general of Virginia, said the transformation was a part of the Army's transformation into a lighter, faster and more maneuverable force.

"This unit has a long history, and it has changed throughout the years as the mission has changed," Newman said. "We are in a fight now to transform the Army and the Army National Guard into a different kind of fighting force. The tradition ideas of combat that we have known in years past have changed."

Col. William C. Schneck, Jr., the engineer brigade commander, applauded the members of the brigade headquarters on the most recent accomplishments, including support for the 276th Engineer Battalion's combat tour in Iraq, support for Hurricane Katrina and handling the many challenges of transformation.

Instead of having engineers in dedicated engineer battalions or brigades, engineer companies will be assigned directly to maneuver brigades. "We are transforming into a modular force, and this will present combat engineers with a number of challenges," Schneck said.

Among those challenges are making sure highly-technical engineer equipment is maintained, and making sure engineers are properly trained and employed so they can accomplish their mission.

"The expertise of the engineer captains, lieutenants and noncommissioned officers will be key to making the new organization work successfully," Schneck said.

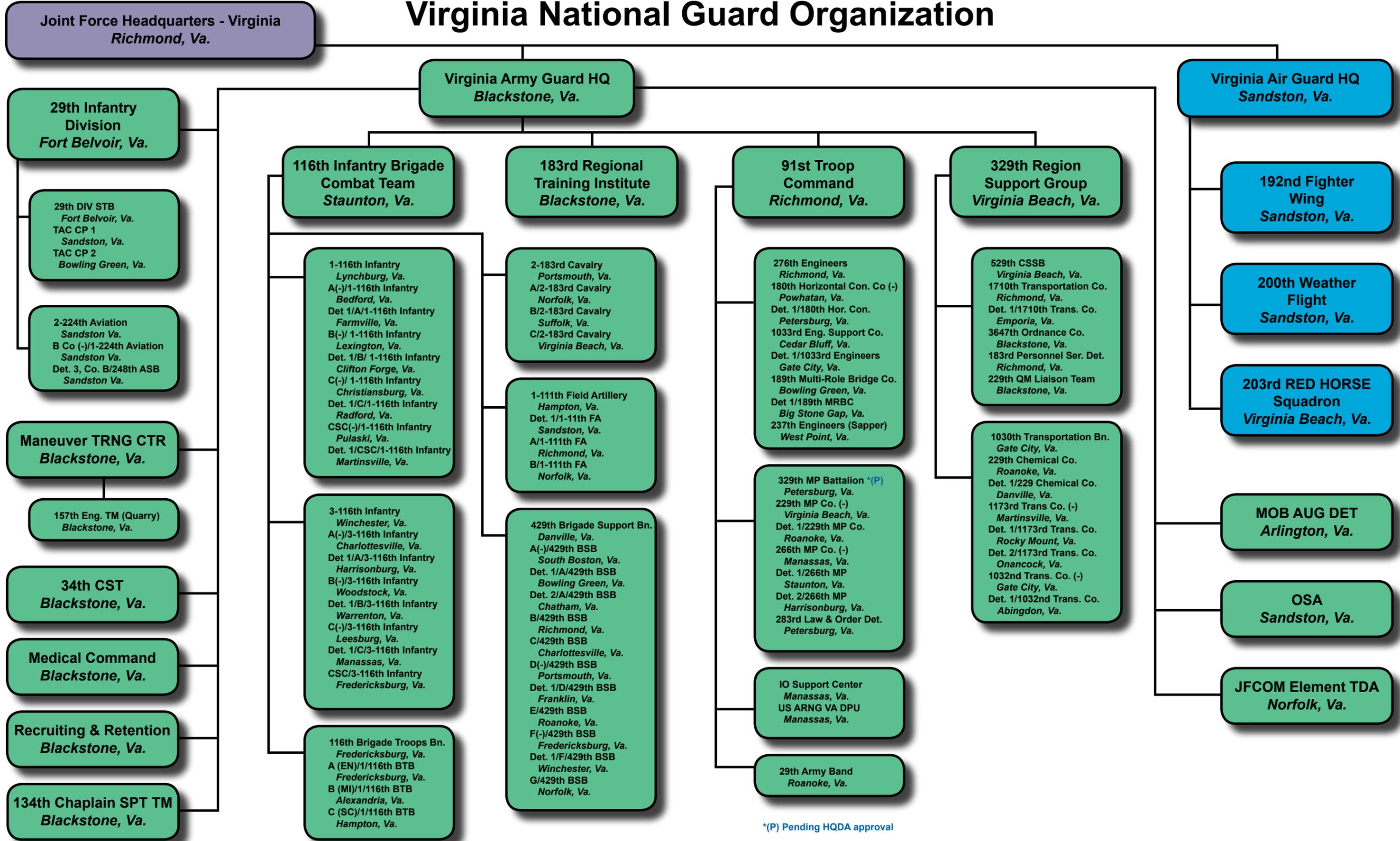
The official lineage and honors of the Headquarter and Headquarters Company, Engineer Brigade, 28th Infantry Division go back to April 10, 1914 when the unit was organized in the Virginia Volunteers

at Richmond as the Field Company, Signal Corps. The unit has been through multiple realignments and re-designations over the years, and they were reorganized and re-designated as the engineer brigade headquarters on Sept. 1, 1995.

The Bowling Green armory will now be home to Tactical Command Post 2 (TAC CP 2) of the 29th Infantry Division headquartered at Fort Belvoir, Va. According to Capt. Chris Brown, the full-time operations officer for the unit, the TAC CP 2 has the mission of providing command and control for 29th Infantry Division. In addition, the organization also has training readiness oversight for numerous units.

Soldiers that were assigned to the engineer brigade headquarters had a number of options to continue their service in the Virginia Guard, Brown said. Some Soldiers were able to find slots in the new unit's organization that called for their current military skill designation, and others have been given the opportunity to train for new skills to fill slots in the TAC CP 2. Some Soldiers elected to transfer to other units in the state where slots were available.

Virginia National Guard Organization



*(P) Pending HQDA approval